Logo

**PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY BEFORE**

**COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION**

**Candidate Information Pack**

**Legal Officer**

**(Ref: LO/25/01)**

**£43,584 to £46,712 – Deputy Principal Grade**

(August 2025 Pay Ward Pending £47,304 to £49,515)

**Reporting to the Head of Legal & Advocacy Services**

**Completed Application Forms must be returned to COPNI**

**no later than 12noon on Thursday 11th September 2025**

|  |
| --- |
| This information pack is designed to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form. It can be requested in alternative formats by contacting HR via email to [recruitment@copni.org](mailto:recruitment@copni.org) |

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**FOREWORD**

Thank you for your interest in applying for a position with the office of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland.

More of us are living longer and healthier lives – and that is very good news indeed.

It is the best public health news of the last century.

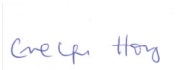
Through careful and focussed use of the legal powers and duties of the Commissioner, there is a real opportunity to change public attitudes to ageing – challenging negative stereotypes of older people and highlighting the positive contribution that older people make to our society.

We will be protecting and promoting the rights and interests of older people.

And we will have a focus on protection, support and care for older people who are vulnerable.

I hope that you will read the candidate information booklet with interest – and if you feel that you would be able to contribute to positive and active ageing in Northern Ireland through a job with the office of the Commissioner for Older People – then please do apply.

I look forward to receiving your application.



**Evelyn Hoy**

**Chief Executive**

**Office of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland**

**SECTION 1: EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

1.1. The Commissioner for Older people for Northern Ireland (COPNI) is committed to the principle of appointments based on merit and to providing equality of opportunity for all applicants and to improving diversity and eradicating under-representation.

1.2 Applications are welcome from all backgrounds regardless of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not you have dependants.

1.3 COPNI collects monitoring data to assess the effectiveness of its equality of opportunity measures. Applicants are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form included in the application pack. Please note, this form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification. The information is used to provide (anonymised) statistical data for all COPNI appointments, and we would encourage you to respond to all sections and return this with your application. It is not made available to the Selection Panel and does not play a role in the decision-making process.

1.4 In respect of the Disability section on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a **substantial** and **long-term adverse effect** on a person’s ability to carry out **normal day-to-day activities**”.

1.5 This definition is interpreted as follows:-

• **Physical impairment** - this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs) caused through illness, by accident or from birth. Examples are blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

• **Mental** impairment- this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability.

• **Substantial** - put simply, this means that the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

• **Long-term adverse effect** - the effect has to have lasted, or be likely to last, overall, for at least twelve months and the effect must be a detrimental one. People who are diagnosed with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled from the point of diagnosis rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

• A **normal day-to-day activity** is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis, such as washing, eating, catching a bus, or turning on a television. It does not mean something as individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

1.6 To meet the definition, a person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA:

• mobility.

• manual dexterity.

• physical coordination.

• continence.

• ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects.

• speech, hearing, or eyesight.

• memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or

• perception of risk of physical danger.

1.7 People who satisfy the definition of ‘disability’ are covered by the DDA. This includes people who have had a disability in the past.

1.8 This information pack is designed to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form. It can be requested in alternative formats by contacting HR via email to [recruitment@copni.org](mailto:recruitment@copni.org) or by telephone 028 90890884

1.9 We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the recruitment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact COPNI Human Res

**The Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland is an Equal Opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation and whether or not they possess a disability or have or do not have dependents. Applications from young people (under the age of 35), people with a disability, and people from minority communities are particularly welcomed for this post.**

**SECTION 2: ABOUT COPNI**

**2.1 Key Duties of the Commissioner for Older People**

* To promote awareness of the interests of older people in Northern Ireland.
* To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the law as it affects the interests of older people.
* To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided to older people by "relevant authorities".
* To promote the provision of opportunities for and the elimination of discrimination against older people.
* To encourage best practice in the treatment of older people.
* To promote positive attitudes towards older people and encourage participation by older people in public life.
  1. To advise the Assembly, the Secretary of State and a relevant authority on matters concerning the interests of older people.
* To take reasonable steps to communicate with older people.

**2.2 General Powers of the Commissioner for Older People**

* Make arrangements for research or educational activities concerning the interests of older people.
* Issue guidance on best practice in relation to any matter concerning the interests of older people.
* Conduct investigations for the purpose of any of the functions associated with the Office.
* Compile and publish information concerning the interests of older people.
* Provide advice or information on any matter concerning the interests of older people.

2.3 Further information can be found at: [http://www.copni.org/about-copni.htm](http://www.copni.org/about-copni.html)l

**SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF KEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**The Post:** This is a permanent full-time appointment, and you will be an employee of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland and **not** an employee of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

**Salary:** The salary for the post will be within the Deputy Principal pay scale of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, currently £43,584 to £46,712. The starting salary is at the minimum of the pay scale.

Please note that the August 2025 Pay Ward is pending and the salary range will be £47,304 to £49,515.

**Location:** The successful candidate will be based at: -

The Office of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland

Equality House

7-9 Shaftesbury Square

Belfast

BT2 7DP

Please note that COPNI has a hybrid working arrangement in place which is currently as follows: -

* All staff days: every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.
* Business need days: outside of the above days when required (e.g., staff meetings, training days, etc.).
* The Legal Officer will also be expected to attend external in-person meetings with clients, attend court, etc., and may have cause to attend the office in relation to the progression of their casework (e.g., the preparation of papers for court).

NB: The hybrid working arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis in line with business needs and are subject to change. Currently under review and may change to 2 days per week in the office.

**Working Hours:** The successful candidate will be required to work 5 days each week, totaling 37 hours exclusive of a lunch break. On occasions the duties may include some evening and weekend work. Staff can access a Flexible Working Hours Scheme and COPNI offers hybrid working arrangements with time spent working at home and from the office.

**Annual Leave**: In addition to the usual 12 days of public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 30 days after 5 years of service.

**Travel:** The successful applicant may be required to travel to various meetings and events mainly throughout Northern Ireland.

**Probation Period:** Confirmation of your appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 12 months. If your performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory your appointment may be terminated. All appointees will be expected to demonstrate a track record of effective service within this period.

**Vetting Procedures:** Prior to appointment with COPNI the following will be required:

* Receipt of your original Birth Certificate or Passport
* Verification of your National Insurance Number (e.g., P45, P60, National Insurance card)
* Proof of (if applicable) original qualification certificates as detailed in the Personnel Specification for the post
* Receipt of two satisfactory references (References will not be sought until after the final stage of the assessment process)
* Appointment will be subject to an AccessNI check

**Pensions:** This is a pensionable appointment, with COPNI staff being eligible to join the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Scheme [the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS (NI)) – Alpha arrangement].

COPNI offers new employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at:

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Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at [www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni).

Applicants who have any queries about the competition process should contact Human Resources on 02890 890884, or email [recruitment@copni.org](mailto:recruitment@copni.org)

**SECTION 4: JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Post:** Legal Officer

**Reports to:** Head of Legal & Advocacy Services

**Salary:** £43,584 to £46,712 (Deputy Principal Grade)

(August 2025 Pay Ward Pending £47,304 to £49,515)

**Hours:** 37 hours per week (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

(flexible working opportunities available)

**Tenure:** Permanent

**Job Purpose:**

The post-holder will play a key role in delivering a client-focused service. They will manage a caseload, dealing with enquiries, providing legal advice, advocating on client’s behalf, and attending meetings / court when required. The post-holder will also be expected to contribute to broader organisational objectives through contributing to policy / procedural reviews, continuous improvement, research and policy advice, and investigations.

The post-holder will also provide support to the Legal Advocacy team.

**Staffing Structure:**

**Key Responsibilities**

1. Formulate and oversee the maintenance of the COPNI’s legal assistance and casework, in line with the COPNI’s overall policies.
2. Ensure the development of systems and processes to ensure effective handling of applications for legal assistance from COPNI within financial and strategy criteria.
3. Ensure the appropriate procedures, controls and structures are in place for the effective, efficient management of casework and monitor their outputs and outcomes.
4. Undertake and manage legal research and produce recommendations to government for legislative change.
5. Formulate and oversee the maintenance of the COPNI’s strategic approach to the selection and conduct of formal investigations.
6. Ensure appropriate action is taken to minimise risk of judicial review when conducting formal investigations.
7. Ensure cost effective and efficient conduct of formal investigations.
8. Ensure the establishment and maintenance of effective systems and processes in respect of investigations and complaints arising in respect of S75 Northern Ireland Act, both individual and Commission generated.
9. Develop and deliver business plans and programmes of work for the Legal Division.
10. Provide high quality leadership to the Legal Division, ensuring that any line managed staff are effectively motivated, managed and developed and that appropriate arrangements are in place for supervision and appraisal.
11. Ensure that services provided are responsive, flexible, cost effective, and delivered within an appropriate timescale using established organisational and management systems.
12. Demonstrate a high level of personal integrity and maintain professional standards throughout the Legal Division.
13. Responsible for developing and maintaining effective communication within the Legal Division and with the rest of the organisation.
14. Provide effective, timely advice and information to the Commissioner, Chief Executive, members of the Senior Management Team and the broader COPNI team.
15. Establish good working relationships and effective communication with the sponsoring government department.
16. All staff are expected to comply with Data Protection, Freedom of Information and COPNI requirements relating to documentation and record keeping.
17. Undertake any other duties on behalf of COPNI as assigned by the Commissioner/Chief Executive or Head of Legal and Policy Advice, as appropriate to the grade.

**Other Duties**

1. To undertake any other duties on behalf of COPNI as assigned by the Commissioner, Chief Executive or Senior Management Team, as appropriate to the grade.
2. To participate in COPNI’s performance management process, including completion of an annual Personal Development Plan and Personal Performance Agreement.
3. To uphold the values of the Commission in terms of its commitment to promoting awareness of the interests of older people and listening to and involving older people in key aspects of the Commissioner’s work.
4. Members of staff are expected at all times to provide the appropriate service and to treat those with whom they come into contact in a courteous and respectful manner.
5. All duties are carried out in compliance with COPNI’s Health and Safety Policy and statutory requirements.
6. COPNI is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All staff are required to adhere to COPNI’s Equal Opportunities Policy throughout the course of employment.
7. To ensure the confidence of the public in COPNI, staff must ensure they maintain the highest standards of personal accountability.
8. All staff are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to promote equality of opportunity between: -

* Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, and sexual orientation.
* Men and women generally.
* Persons with a disability and persons without; and
* Persons with dependents and persons without.

1. All staff are expected to comply with Data Protection, Freedom of Information and COPNI requirements relating to documentation and record keeping in line with GDPR guidelines.

**The above is given as a broad range of duties and is not intended to be a complete description of all tasks. It is important to note that the responsibilities may change to meet the evolving needs of COPNI.**

**SECTION 5: PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Essential Criteria (Eligibility Criteria)**

The successful applicant must be able to demonstrate via evidence on their application form that, by the closing date for applications, they meet the following criteria:-

1. Be qualified as a solicitor entitled to practice in Northern Ireland or in a position to become so entitled by the date of appointment.
2. Have at least 3 years’ post qualification experience within the last 5 years in at least two of the following areas: constitutional law, administrative / public law (including judicial review), contract law, employment law, civil litigation, human rights law, family law.
3. Experience of gathering and analysing information, including taking instructions, conducting enquiries, and preparing evidence to support legal casework.
4. One year’s experience of supervising or managing staff.
5. Have the ability to create and maintain relationships with key stakeholders.
6. The ability to communicate confidently, clearly, and persuasively, both orally and in writing with the ability to understand, value and incorporate different perspectives.

**Desirable Criteria (Short-listing Criteria)**

In addition to the essential criteria above, applicants should be aware that after an eligibility shift, should it be necessary to short-list candidates to go forward to interview, this will be done by applying the following additional criteria in the following order: -

1. An understanding of issues affecting older people covered by the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland’s remit.
2. Knowledge and understanding of Health and Social Care systems and services pertaining to or affecting older people.

**General note**

Applicants should demonstrate in their application how they meet all the criteria outlined above. Clear evidence should be provided of all the elements of each criterion in the application form giving specific length of experience, examples, and dates. It is not sufficient to simply provide a list of duties and responsibilities. The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of an applicant’s post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.

**If an applicant does not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates, in their application form against each individual criterion as stated, the selection panel will reject the application.**

**SECTION 6: CORE COMPETENCIES**

6.1 The NICS Competency Framework 2014 (updated April 2018) sets out what people in different grades need to do in order to be effective at work. It is not enough to just have the knowledge and skills to do our jobs. Competence is about what people actually do; it is about how we apply or demonstrate our knowledge and skills whilst carrying out our tasks. Demonstrated competence is observable and measurable.

6.2 This post is similar to Deputy Principal grade (DP) in the NICS. Further information on the Core Competences associated with this grade can be accessed through [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk).

6.3 **Competency Based Interview:** The competency-based interview will be conducted by a panel consisting of 3 suitably qualified professionals. Due regard will be given to the composition of the selection panel in respect of gender and community balance.

6.4 If necessary, COPNI reserves the right to hold a two-stage interview process.

6.5 In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria and shortlisting criteria applicants will also be expected to display the following competencies and skills at the interview:

**Seeing the big picture**

* Be alert to emerging issues, legislation and trends which might impact, or benefit own and team’s work.
* Understand own business area strategy and how this contributes to departmental policies and priorities.
* Contribute to the development of policies, plans and service provision to meet citizens’ diverse needs based on an up-to-date knowledge of needs, issues, and relevant good practice.
* Ensure own business area/team activities are aligned to departmental activity, policy, and priorities.
* Actively seek out and share experience to develop understanding and knowledge of own work and of team’s business area.
* Seek to understand how the services, activities, and strategies work together in the business area to create value for the customer/end user.

**Changing and improving**

* Find ways to improve systems, policy development and structures to deliver with more streamlined resources.
* Regularly review procedures or systems with teams to identify improvements and simplify processes and decision making.
* Be prepared to take managed risks, ensuring these are planned and their impact assessed.
* Actively encourage ideas from a wide range of sources and stakeholders and use these to inform own thinking.
* Be willing to meet the challenges of difficult or complex changes, encouraging and supporting others to do the same.
* Prepare for and respond appropriately to the range of possible effects that change may have on role/team.

**Making Effective Decisions**

* Make decisions when they are needed, even if they prove difficult or unpopular.
* Identify a range of relevant and credible information sources and recognise the need to collect new data, when necessary, from internal and external sources.
* Recognise patterns and trends in a wide range of evidence/data that may affect policy and draw key conclusions.
* Explore different options outlining costs, benefits, risks, and potential responses to each.
* Recognise scope of own authority for decision making and empower team members to make decisions.
* Invite challenge and, where appropriate, involve others in decision making to help build engagement and present robust recommendations.

**Leading and Communicating**

* Take opportunities to regularly communicate and interact with staff, helping to clarify goals and activities and the links between these and Departmental policy and strategy.
* Recognise, respect, and reward the contribution and achievements of others.
* Communicate effectively orally and in writing in a succinct, engaging manner; know when to stand ground when needed.
* Communicate using appropriate styles, methods, and timing, including digital channels, to maximise understanding and impact.
* Promote the work of the Department and play an active part in supporting the NICS values and culture.
* Convey enthusiasm and energy about their work and encourage others to do the same.

**Collaborating and Partnering**

* Establish relationships with a range of stakeholders to support delivery of policy and business outcomes.
* Invest time to generate a common focus and genuine team spirit.
* Actively seek input from a diverse range of people.
* Readily share resources to support higher priority work, showing pragmatism and support for the shared goals of the organisation.
* Deal with conflict in a prompt, calm and constructive manner.
* Encourage collaborative team working within own team and across the Department.

**Building Capability for All**

* Identify and address team or individual capability requirements and gaps to deliver current and future work.
* Develop team members, devoting time to coach, mentor and develop others.
* Value and respond to different personal needs in the team using these to develop others and promote inclusiveness.
* Proactively manage own career and identify own learning needs with line manager, plan and carry out workplace learning opportunities.
* Continually seek and act on feedback to evaluate and improve their own and team’s performance.

**Delivering Value for Money**

* Recommend actions to achieve value for money and efficiency and reduce fraud and error.
* Cultivate and encourage an awareness of cost, using clear simple examples of benefits and how to measure outcomes.
* Work confidently with performance management and financial data to prepare forecasts and manage and monitor budget against agreed plans.
* Follow appropriate financial procedures to monitor contracts to ensure deliverables are achieved.
* Monitor the use of resources in line with organisational procedures and plans and hold team to account.

**Managing a Quality Service**

* Make effective use of project management skills and techniques to deliver outcomes, including identifying risks and mitigating actions.
* Develop, implement, maintain, and review systems and service standards to provide quality, efficiency, and value for money.
* Work with team to set priorities, goals, objectives, and timescales.
* Establish mechanisms to seek out and respond to feedback from customers about policy and service provided.
* Promote a culture that tackles fraud and error, keeping others informed of outcomes.
* Develop proposals to improve the quality of service with involvement from a diverse range of staff, stakeholders, or delivery partners.

**Delivering at Pace**

* Successfully manage, support, and stretch self and team to deliver agreed goals and objectives.
* Show a positive approach in keeping their own and the team’s efforts focused on the goals that really matter.
* Take responsibility for delivering expected outcomes on time and to standard, giving credit to terms and individuals as appropriate.
* Plan ahead but reassess workloads and priorities if situations change or people are facing conflicting demands.
* Regularly monitor own and team’s work against policy, milestones or targets and act promptly to keep work on track and maintain performance.
* Coach and support others to set and achieve challenging goals for themselves.

**Achieving Outcomes through Delivery Partners**

* Consider, in consultation with experts, alternative ways of working with partners and contractors to identify more efficient outcomes, balancing cost, quality and turnaround times.
* Work with experts in engaging effectively and intelligently with delivery partners in order to define and/or improve policy and service delivery.
* Gather and use evidence to assess the costs, benefits, and risks of a wide range of delivery options when making decisions.
* Identify and understand relevant legal and commercial terms, concepts, policies, and processes (including project approvals and assurance procedures) to deliver agreed outcomes.

**Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant’s knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly. The evidence you use may relate to your achievements and/or experiences in any kind of setting, for example, work, education, or leisure and must, of course, be factual.**

**SECTION 7: APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

7.1 The appointment will be made following an open, transparent, and merit-based competition conducted in accordance with COPNI’s Recruitment Policy & Procedure.

**Application Procedure (A Guide to Applicants)**

7.2 Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge, experience, skills, or competence through completion of the application form. This form contains the Essential Criteria which reflect the knowledge, experience, skills, and competences required by applicants in order to be eligible for appointment.

7.3 The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and **must NOT be altered.** Similarly, applicants **must not reformat** application forms.

7.4 Electronic or legible, handwritten versions of application forms are acceptable. **We cannot accept** CVs, letters, additional pages, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms, or applications where the format of the form has been altered.

7.5 Please complete your application form in **black ink**, in either typescript Arial, font 12 or handwritten. **The box for each criterion is fixed and your response should be contained with the specific box.**

7.6 COPNI will not examine applications until after the closing date.

7.7 Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail, etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer or your job.

7.8 Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write “I” statements e.g. “I planned meetings”, “I prepared a presentation”. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.

7.9 The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your *unique* experience the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.

7.10 All parts of the application form must be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. COPNI will not accept incomplete application forms or application forms received after the closing deadline.

7.11 If by reason of disability you require the application form to be in an alternative format, please contact HR via email to [recruitment@copni.org](mailto:recruitment@copni.org) or by telephone 028 90890884.

**Selection Process**

7.12 The selection process will be evidence-led. Your application will be assessed by the panel, against the criteria set out in the Person Specification, using the information in your application form.

7.13 The assessment panel will meet to agree a shortlist of applicants for final interview. Only those applicants assessed as meeting all the essential criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process which will involve an interview. Candidates invited to final interview will be advised on the full selection panel membership. Interviews are normally held at our offices in Belfast, and, where requested, we will discuss reasonable adjustments with you beforehand.

7.14 In order to encourage diversity, COPNI is committed to interviewing as many eligible applicants as practicable without further short-listing being applied. However, in the case of a high volume of applications the Panel may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview in a proportionate manner. If this happens, the Selection Panel will agree a higher acceptable requirement (i.e., a higher overall pass mark) prior to commencing the eligibility sift. The purpose of this will be to identify those applicants whom the Selection Panel considers best meet the essential criteria from the written evidence provided in their application forms.

7.15 Should the Panel need to limit the number of applicants invited for interview COPNI will operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for this appointment process. The GIS has been developed for applicants with disabilities or those with a long-term impairment or health condition, which is expected to last for at least 12 months. In these circumstances, provided that the applicant has demonstrated in their application form that they have met the criteria, the applicant will be offered a guaranteed interview. If you wish to apply under this scheme, you must indicate this and sign the declaration. You must be considered as disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This means you must have, or have had in the past, a physical or mental impairment which has had a substantial long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes sensory impairments, people who have had a disability in the past even if they are no longer disabled, people whose disability is likely to last for 12 months or the rest of their life and people whose condition is likely to progress or recur. Severe disfigurement is also acknowledged as a disability.

7.16 Where a candidate is unable to attend interview on a set date, an alternative date will only be offered at the discretion of the panel.

7.17 Please note that the Commission does not pay for travel expenses for those attending interview (unless they relate to reasonable adjustments).

**Interview Guidance for Applicants**

7.18 At interview, the panel will ask you question about your experience and expertise and ask specific questions to find out whether you meet the criteria set out in the Person Specification.

7.19 If this is your first experience of a competency-based interview process, please bear in mind that it does **not** require you to: -

* Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish.
* Provide generalised information as to your background and experience.
* Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the question that is being asked.

7.20 The interview process **will** require you to: -

* Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfil the duties outlined above to ensure effective performance in the role; and
* Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the duties required for this post.

7.21 In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

* Situation – briefly outline the situation.
* Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve.
* Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution.
* Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

7.22 The Panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the criteria. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail an example or range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence/criteria area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

**The Merit Principle**

7.23 Appointments to COPNI are made under the ‘merit principle’, where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition

7.24 The Selection Panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment.

7.25 The Selection Panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. COPNI will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed.

7.26 The order of merit is valid for one year.

**Further Appointments from this Competition**

7.27 Where a further position in the organisation is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this Candidate Information Booklet, consideration may be given to filling the position from this competition.

7.28 The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year from the date of the panel decision.

**SECTION 8: MISCELLEANOUS**

**Pre-appointment Checks**

8.1 COPNI will undertake a number of pre-employment checks before making a formal offer of employment. These will include the following.

* Pre-employment Health Check: A pre-employment health check will be carried out on the successful applicant as part of the recruitment process.
* Identify Check: The successful candidate will be required to provide proof of identify.
* Employment History Check: A pre-employment health check will be carried out on the successful applicant as part of the recruitment process.
* Qualifications Check: The successful candidate will be required to provide original certificates of any qualifications required for the post (as listed in the Person Specification).
* Criminal History Record Check: This appointment is subject to a criminal history record check and will require an AccessNI Basic Disclosure Certificate. If you are selected for appointment, you will be asked to apply to AccessNI for a Basic Disclosure Certificate. This disclosure is sought to assist with the decision-making process; however, a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.

**Nationality Requirements**

8.2 In addition to the above pre-employment checks COPNI must also ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. Applicants must be either:

1. A UK or Irish national
2. A Commonwealth citizen with the Right to Abode and associated Certificate of Entitlement.
3. An EEA national with (or eligible for) status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).
4. A non-EEA national with a valid Independent Leave to Remain (ILR) or other valid permission that provides the right to work in the UK such as visa, biometric residence permits or another official document

“UK national” means a person who is a British citizen (including persons from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), a British subject under part IV of the British Nationality Act 1981 having the right of abode in the UK, or a British Dependent Territories citizen acquiring their citizenship from connection with Gibraltar.

“Commonwealth citizen” means any person who has the status of a Commonwealth citizen under the British Nationality Act 1981, not covered by the “UK national” definition above. This includes British Dependent Territories citizens (other than Gibraltarians), British Overseas citizens and, from 1986, those persons in the category British National (Overseas).

8.3 Advice on nationality for the above may be obtained from the Home Office website, [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk) or at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>.

**Feedback to Candidates**

8.4 The Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair and in accordance with the principles of COPNI. We are therefore committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/short listing as well as at interview. All requests for feedback are welcome and should be in writing.

**Privacy**

8.5 Your privacy is important to us and COPNI will process your personal data in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). A copy of COPNI’s Privacy Notice is available on our website [www.copni.org](http://www.copni.org).

**Timeframe for Process**

8.6 The recruitment timeline for this vacancy is as follows: -

* Advertising: Week commencing Monday 25th August 2025.
* Closing date: 12noon on Thursday 11th September 2025.
* Shortlisting: Week commencing Monday 15th September 2025.
* Interviews: Week commencing Monday 29th September 2025.

Please note that these timeframes are indicative and may be subject to change.

**How to Apply**

8.7 Application forms and further information may be obtained by emailing [recruitment@copni.org](mailto:recruitment@copni.org), visiting our website at [www.copni.org](http://www.copni.org) or by telephoning [028 90](Tel:02890)890884, or in writing to Human Resources, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland, Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP.

8.8 Completed application forms must be returned by **12noon on Thursday 11th September 2025** either by email to [rercruitment@copni.org](mailto:rercruitment@copni.org), or by post / in person to the address detailed above (at paragraph 8.7).

8.9 If posting, please ensure you leave sufficient time for it to be received by the deadline and that your application is signed and dated. Please bear in mind that first class mail does not guarantee next-day delivery. Please ensure that posted applications contain the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery, causing you to miss the closing date. COPNI will not accept any application where there is a shortfall in postage.

8.10 If delivering by hand, please note that it is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that hand delivered applications have the date and time of delivery recorded on the form/envelope by the receptionist.

8.11 Late applications will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances.

**THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART OF**

**THE CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**